

BOARD MEETING DATE: March 3, 2017

AGENDA NO. 3

PROPOSAL: Approve Year-Round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program and Authorize Rebate Payments 

SYNOPSIS: For the past 14 years, the SCAQMD has implemented an Electric Lawn Mower Exchange Program. Over the last two years, the Program has experienced declining exchanges, likely due to the severe drought across California and market saturation. Staff proposes to modify the Program by offering a year-round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program on a first-come, first-served basis, where participants would receive a rebate through an online application process after purchasing a new battery-electric lawn mower and scrapping their old gasoline-powered lawn mower at a participating licensed dismantler. This action is to approve the year-round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program on a first-come, first-served basis and authorize the Executive Officer to issue rebates to program participants in a total amount not to exceed \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27).

COMMITTEE: Mobile Source, February 17, 2017; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the implementation of the year-round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program on a first-come, first-served basis and authorize the Executive Officer to issue rebates under the terms of the program for the purchase of a battery-operated electric lawn mower in a total amount not to exceed \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27).

Wayne Natri
Executive Officer

Background

For the past 14 years, the SCAQMD has implemented the Electric Lawn Mower Exchange Program for residents in SCAQMD's four-county region. The Program required the public to pre-register to attend one of the events where they would exchange an operable gasoline-powered lawn mower for a new battery-electric model at a discounted price. Over the past two years, the number of exchanges has declined by 64 and 86 percent, respectively, likely due to the severe drought across California and market saturation of battery-electric lawn mowers. In 2015, the State of California ordered a 25 percent reduction in urban water usage in first-ever mandatory statewide reductions. As a result, government agencies within the SCAQMD jurisdiction have responded by offering incentives to remove lawns and limit residential watering. Additionally, when the Program was originally initiated, there were only two companies manufacturing cordless electric lawnmowers. Today, there are over 20 companies manufacturing electric lawn mowers, with many of them available for purchase at local hardware and home improvement stores.

Proposal

To respond to these challenges, staff proposes to modify the Program by offering a year-round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program on a first-come, first-served basis. The Program will allow residents living within the SCAQMD jurisdiction to turn in their fully functional old gasoline-powered lawn mower to a participating dismantler for permanent destruction and receive a rebate towards the purchase price of a new battery-operated electric lawn mower through an online application. The public will have the flexibility of purchasing their electric mower from an extensive list of manufacturer-authorized retailers or dealers, including hardware and home improvement stores. Once the online application, including proof of dismantling the old mower, and the purchase verification is submitted to the SCAQMD, a rebate check will be issued for every gasoline-powered lawn mower exchanged for a cordless zero emission electric lawn mower.

The eligible rebate amounts are based on the purchase price of the battery-electric lawn mower and do not include costs such as taxes, fees, accessories and delivery charges. The proposed rebate amounts are:

- \$150 for a mower with a purchase price of \$250 or less*;
- \$200 for a mower with a purchase price of \$251 to \$400; and
- \$250 for a mower with a purchase price of more than \$400.

The SCAQMD will also partner with several dismantlers in the Basin for implementation of the Program, and staff will post a list of both eligible electric lawn mower manufacturers and participating dismantlers on SCAQMD's website.

* Rebate cannot exceed cost of lawn mower.

This action is to approve the implementation of the year-round Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program on a first-come, first-served basis from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27). This Program will continue until all funds are exhausted, after which staff may return to the Board to seek approval for additional funds.

Benefits to SCAQMD

The Electric Lawn Mower Rebate Program reduces exposure to harmful emissions from the use of zero emission electric lawn mowers within the South Coast Air Basin. Since replacement of gasoline-powered lawn mowers are not currently required, their replacement with zero emission electric lawn mowers will achieve surplus emission reductions of carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, hydrocarbons and particulate matter. The year-round program will also significantly reduce staff resources, enabling staff to focus on other incentive activities.

Resource Impact

The total cost of the proposed program will not exceed \$250,000 from the Rule 2202 Air Quality Investment Fund (27).